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THE CHRISTIAN TRAVELLER.

AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.

Having tarried a few days in a beautiful village of the West, I embarked in a vessel which was crossing one of the great lakes. Three other individuals had taken passage, and night coming on found us waiting for a breeze.

About 9 o'clock, as the sails were hoisted, another passenger came on board. When we had cleared the harbor he entered the cabin and seemed to suppose that he was alone: for we had all retired to our berths. The lamp was burning dimly on the table, but it afforded sufficient light for me to discover that he was young. Seating himself beside it, he drew a book from his pocket and read a few minutes. Suddenly, from on deck, was heard the voice of the captain, uttering oaths, terrific beyond description. The youth arose, laid his book in the chair, and kneeling beside it, in a low whisper engaged in prayer. I listened attentively, and thought his soul seemed to burn within him; I could gather only an occasional word, or part of a sentence, such as "mercy," "dying heathen," "sinners," etc. Presently he seemed in an agony of spirit for these swearers, and could scarcely suppress his voice while pleading with God to have mercy on them. My soul was stirred within me. There was a sacredness in this place, and I was self-condemned, knowing that I also professed the name of Jesus, and had retired, with my fellow-passengers, to rest, not having spoken of God or committed myself to his care.

Early in the morning I was waked by a loud voice at the door of the companion-way: "Here! whose Tracts are these?" followed by other voices in threats and imprecations against Tract distributors, Bethels, Temperance societies, etc.

I thought of the young stranger, and feared they would execute their threats upon him; but he calmly said, "Those Tracts, sir, are mine. I have but few, as you see, but they are very good, and you may take one, if you wish. I brought them on board to distribute,

but you were all too busy last night." The sailor smiled and walked away, making no reply.

We were soon called to breakfast with the captain and mate. When we were seated at the table, "Captain," said our young companion, "as the Lord supplies all our wants, if neither you or the passengers object, I would like to ask His blessing on our repast."

"If you please," replied the captain, with apparent good will. In a few minutes the cook was on deck, and informed the sailors, who were instantly in an uproar, and their mouths filled with curses. The captain attempted to apologize for the profanity of his men, saying, "it was perfectly common among sailors, and they meant no harm by it."

"With your leave, captain," said the young stranger, "I think we can put an end to it."

Himself a swearer, and having just apologized for his men, the captain was puzzled for an answer; but, after a little hesitation, replied, "I might as well attempt to sail against a head wind as to think of such a thing."

"But I meant all I said," added the young man.

"Well, if you think it possible, you may try it," said the captain.

As soon as breakfast was over, the oldest and most profane of the sailors seated himself on the quarter-deck to smoke his pipe. The young man entered into conversation with him, and soon drew from him a history of the adventures of his life. From his boyhood he had followed the ocean. He had been tossed on the billows in many a tempest; had visited several missionary stations in different parts of the world, and gave his testimony to the good effects of missionary efforts among the natives of the Sandwich islands. Proud of his nautical skill, he at length boasted that he could do anything that could be done by a sailor.

"I doubt it," said the young man.

"I can," answered the hardy tar, "and will not be outdone, my word for it."

"Well, when a sailor passes his word he ought to be believed. I know a sailor who resolved that he would stop swearing, and did so."

"Ah," said the old sailor, "you've anchored me; I'm fast—but I can do it."

"I know you can," said the young man, "and I hope you will anchor all your shipmates' oaths with yours."

Not a word of profanity was afterward heard on board the vessel. During the day, as opportunity presented itself, he conversed with each sailor singly on the subject of his soul's salvation, and gained the hearts of all.

By this time I was much interested with the young stranger, and determined to know more of him. There was nothing prepossessing in his appearance; his dress was plain; his manners unassuming; but his influence had, by the blessing of God, in a few short hours greatly changed the aspect of our crew. The tiger seemed softened to a lamb, and peace and quiet had succeeded confusion and blasphemy.

After supper, he requested of the captain the privilege of attending worship in the cabin. His wishes were complied with, and soon all on board, except the man at the helm, were assembled. The captain brought out a Bible, which he said was given him in early life by his father with a request that he would never part with it. We listened as our friend read Matthew's account of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection; and then looking round upon us, he said, "He is risen—yes, Jesus lives, let us worship him."

It was a melting scene. Knees that seldom bowed before now knelt at the altar of prayer, while the solemnities of eternity seemed hanging over us. After prayer we went on deck and sang a hymn. It was a happy place—a *floating Bethel*. Instead of confusion and wrath, there was sweet peace and solemnity. We ceased just as the setting sun was flinging upon us his last cheering rays.

"Look yonder!" he exclaimed. "You, who have been nursed in the storm and cradled in the tempest, look at the setting sun, and learn a lesson that will make you happy when it shall set to rise no more. As rose that sun this morning to afford us light and comfort, so has the Son of God arisen to secure salvation to all who accept and love him; and as that sun withdraws its beams, and we are veiled in darkness for a

season, so will the Son of Righteousness withdraw his offers of mercy from all who continue to neglect them. But remember, that season is one that never ends—one dark, perpetual night.”

The captain, deeply affected, went into the cabin, lit his lamp, took his Bible, and was engaged in reading till we had retired to rest.

In the morning, as soon as we were seated at the breakfast-table, the captain invited our friend to ask a blessing. “There, gentlemen,” said he, “this is the first time I ever made such a request; and never, till this young man came on board, have I been asked for the privilege of holding prayers, though I have a thousand times expected it, both on the ocean and the lake; and have as often, on being disappointed, cursed religion in my heart, and believed that it was all delusion. Now I see the influence of the Bible, and though I make no claims to religion myself I respect it, for my parents were Christians; and though I have never followed their counsels, I cannot forget them.”

After this, for three days, we regularly attended family worship, and had much interesting conversation on various subjects, for there was nothing in the religion of the young stranger to repress the cheerfulness of social intercourse. From his familiarity with the Bible, his readiness in illustrating its truths and presenting its motives; and from his fearless, but judicious and persevering steps, we concluded that he was a minister of the gospel. From all he saw he gathered laurels to cast at his Master’s feet, and in all his movements aimed to show that eternity was not to be trifled with. A few hours before we arrived in port we ascertained that he was a *mechanic*.

Before we reached the wharf the captain came forward, and with much feeling bade him farewell; declared that he was resolved to live as he had done no longer—his wife, he said, was a Christian, and he meant to go and live with her; and added, “I have had ministers as passengers on my vessel Sabbath days and week days, but never before have I been reminded of the family altar where my departed parents knelt.” As we left the vessel, every countenance showed that our

friend had, by his decided, yet mild and Christian faithfulness, won the gratitude of many and the esteem of all.

We soon found ourselves in a canal boat where were about thirty passengers of various ages and characters; and my curiosity was not a little excited to learn how my companion would proceed among them. The afternoon had nearly passed away, and he had conversed with no one but myself. At length he inquired of the captain if he were willing to have prayers on board.

"I have no objection," said he, "if the passengers have not; but *I* shan't attend."

At an early hour the passengers were invited into the cabin, and in a few minutes the captain was seated among them. After reading a short portion of Scripture, our friend made a few appropriate remarks, and earnestly commended us to God.

As soon as he rose from prayer, a gentleman, whose head was whitening for the grave, said, "Sir, I should like to converse with you. I profess to be a deist. I once professed religion, but now I believe it is all delusion."

"Sir," said the young man, "I respect age, and will listen to you; and as you proceed, may perhaps ask a few questions; but I cannot debate, I can only say that I must love Jesus Christ. He died to save me, and I am a great sinner."

"I do not deny that men are sinners," said the old man, "but I don't believe in Christ."

"Will you, then, tell us how sinners can be saved in some other way, and God's law be honored?"

We waited in vain for a reply, when my friend proceeded: "Not many years since I was an infidel, because I did not love the truth, and was unwilling to examine it. Now I see my error; and the more I study the Bible the firmer is my conviction of its truth, and that there is no way of salvation but through a crucified Redeemer."

As the passengers sat engaged in conversation, one of them at length turned to our young friend and related the circumstances of a murder recently perpetrated by a man in the neighborhood while in a fit of intoxica-

tion. To this all paid the strictest attention. The captain joined them to hear the story, the conclusion of which afforded an opportunity for the stranger to begin his work. He was the fearless advocate of temperance as well as religion, and here gained some friends to this cause.

"But," said he at length, "though alcohol occasions an immense amount of crime and misery in our world, I recollect one instance of murder with which it had no connection." He then related, as nearly as I can remember, the following story:

"In a populous city at the East was a man who seemed to live only for the good of others. He daily exhibited the most perfect benevolence toward his fellow-men; sought out the poor and needy, and relieved their wants; sympathized with and comforted the sick and the afflicted; and, though he was rich, his unsparing beneficence reduced him to poverty. He deserved the esteem of all, yet he had enemies. He took no part in politics, yet many feared that his generosity was a cloak of ambition, and that he was making friends in order to secure to himself the reins of government. Others feared that his religious sentiments, connected with his consistent life, would expose their hypocrisy. At length a mock-trial was held by an infuriated mob, and he was condemned and put to death!"

"Where was that?"—"When was it?"—"Who was it?"—was heard from several voices.

"It was in the City of Jerusalem, and the person was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. By his enemies he was hung upon the cross, and for us, guilty sinners, he died."

Every eye was fixed upon the young man, and a solemn awe rested on every countenance. He opened a Bible which lay upon the table, and read the account of Christ's condemnation and death: the captain nodded to him as a signal for prayer, and we all again fell on our knees, while we wept over the condition of sinners, and, for the sake of Christ, besought God's mercy upon them. Here, again, was a floating Bethel.

In the morning the stranger was not forgotten, and he evidently did not forget that there were immortal souls

around him, hastening with him to the bar of God. During the day he conversed separately with each individual, except an elderly gentleman, who had followed him from seat to seat, and showed such uneasiness of mind; the realities of eternity were set before us, and the Holy Spirit seemed to be striving with many hearts.

As the mantle of evening was drawing around us, our friend requested an interview with the aged man.

"Yes, yes," said he, "I have been wishing all day to see you, but you were talking with others."

He acknowledged that he had tried to be a universalist; and though he could not rest in that belief, he never until the previous evening saw his lost condition. "And now," said he, "I want you to tell me what I shall do."

The young man raised his eyes to heaven, as if imploring the Spirit's influences, and then briefly explained the nature and reasonableness of repentance and faith, accompanied by a few striking illustrations, in proof of the justice of God in condemning, and his mercy in pardoning sinners.

The old man saw the plan of redemption so clearly, that he burst into tears and exclaimed, "O, my soul, my soul! How have I sinned against God! I see it—I feel it—yes, I have sinned all my days."

"But Jesus died to save sinners," replied the young man; "will you, my friend, give him your heart?"

"O, yes, yes; if I had a thousand hearts he should have them all," was the answer.

The young man turned away and wept. For some minutes, silence was broken only by the deep sighs of the aged penitent. There was something, in an hour like this, awfully solemn. Heaven was rejoicing, I doubt not, over a returning prodigal. As he stood alone and wept, he reiterated again and again, "Yes, I will serve God, I will, I will." After a time his feelings became more calm, and lifting his eyes toward heaven with both hands raised, he broke out in singing:

"There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast."

And then again he wept, and said, "Yes, O, Jesus, precious Saviour."

The time had come for our young friend to leave us. By his zeal in his Master's service he had stolen our hearts, and ~~they~~ pressed forward to express their friendship in an affectionate farewell.

Such was the influence of one individual, whose unwavering purpose it was to *live* for God. He felt for dying sinners, and, relying on the influences of the Holy Spirit for success, labored for the salvation of souls around him. Will not the reader solemnly resolve, in God's strength, that, henceforth, *whether at home or abroad*, he will make the glory of Christ, in the salvation of men, the one object of his life? When Christians universally shall do this, we may expect soon to hear the song of Zion float on every breeze: "Alleluia!" "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

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